

## Numbers 32:1-22 - Thursday, March 10th, 2011

**32:1** Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock; and when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that indeed the region was a place for livestock, 2 the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, 3 "Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Shebam, Nebo, and Beon, 4 the country which the LORD defeated before the congregation of Israel, is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock." 5 Therefore they said, "If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan."

- Well, this is interesting. Here we have the tribe of Reuben and Gad calling a meeting with Moses Eleazar and the congregation leaders.
- Their request is, instead of crossing over the Jordan and into the Promised-Land, they wish to settle on the east side of the Jordan river.
- It seems they're content to stay put, right where they're at. They don't want to press on, and into, that which God had promised to them.

- Here's why I find this to be most interesting; sad but true this describes me and you in that we too are prone to do the same exact thing.
- It's for this reason we never enter into the promises of God. Like the tribe of Reuben and Gad, we don't want to cross over our Jordan.
- I believe that woven into the fabric of this passage, are what I'll call "hidden hindrances" to us as believers receiving God's promises.

- Right out of the shoot, in just these first five verses, we have several clues as to why it was that they wanted to stay where they were at.
- 1. Prosperity: in verse one we're told that they "had a very great multitude of livestock," which indicates, that they were now very wealthy.
- 2. Carnality: this can be missed at first glance, but note that this decision is made in the flesh, based solely on its economic implications.
- 3. Convenience: notice it's when they saw the land was a good place for their livestock and that it was conveniently located in that region.
- 4. Contentment: clearly, they're perfectly content right where they're at and don't want to move forward and press on stepping out in faith.

6 And Moses said to the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben: "Shall your brethren go to war while you sit here? 7 Now why will you discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD has given them?"

- Moses responds to them by asking them these two very probing questions, which actually exposes what their motives are in doing this.
- 5. Selfishness: They are selfish and inconsiderate in that they have absolutely no regard for how this will impact the others in their faith.
- 6. Laziness: Simply put, the reason they want to stay put, is because moving is really hard work, and they're too lazy to do the hard thing.
- 7. Fear: They don't want to go to war, fight the battles, or take the risk because the fear in their hearts is paralyzing and immobilizing.

8 Thus your fathers did when I sent them away from Kadesh Barnea to see the land. 9 For when they went up to the Valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, so that they did not go into the land which the LORD had given them.

- Here, Moses reminds them of their forefathers who, out of their fear, wouldn't go into the land because they discouraged the Israelites.
- 8. Discouragement: I am learning that the role discouragement plays in derailing and defeating the life of a believer can't be understated.

10 So the LORD's anger was aroused on that day, and He swore an oath, saying, 11 'Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, 12 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the LORD.' 13 So the LORD's anger was aroused against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD was gone. 14 And look! You have risen in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to increase still more the fierce anger of the LORD against Israel. 15 For if you turn away from following Him, He will once again leave them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all these people."

- Wow, Moses is really in their face! In effect, he's saying their complacency could cost all the Israelites the Promised-Land yet again.
- In other words, their fathers became complacent and adopted the attitude of, where we're at is good enough, and it cost them the land.
- 9. Mediocrity: This one is doubly dangerous because it not only hinders us it limits God in that we don't aspire to do great things for God.

**2 Kings 13:14-19 NIV** Now Elisha was suffering from the illness from which he died. Jehoash king of Israel went down to see him and wept over him. "My father! My father!" he cried. "The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" (15) Elisha said, "Get a bow and some arrows," and he did so. (16) "Take the bow in your hands," he said to the king of Israel. When he had taken it, Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. (17) "Open the east window," he said, and he opened it. "Shoot!" Elisha said, and he shot. "The LORD's arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Aram!" Elisha declared. "You will completely destroy the Arameans at Aphek." (18) Then he said, "Take the arrows," and the king took them. Elisha told him, "Strike the ground." He struck it three times and stopped. (19) The man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times."

16 Then they came near to him and said: "We will build sheepfolds here for our livestock, and cities for our little ones, 17 but we ourselves will be armed, ready to go before the children of Israel until we have brought them to their place; and our little ones will dwell in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. 18 We will not return to our homes until every one of the children of Israel has received his inheritance. 19 For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has fallen to us on this eastern side of the Jordan."

- This is humorous. It's as if they're saying; "OK, fine then, we'll go fight if we have to, but when we're finished we're not staying there!"
- 10. Apathy: This exposes a hidden hindrance in the heart by virtue of one's lack of the commitment to follow through and do what's right.
- Contentment: I'm good where I'm at. Complacency; It will have to do where I'm at. Apathy "I can't commit because of where I'm at."

20 Then Moses said to them: "If you do this thing, if you arm yourselves before the LORD for the war,<sup>21</sup> and all your armed men cross over the Jordan before the LORD until He has driven out His enemies from before Him,<sup>22</sup> and the land is subdued before the LORD, then afterward you may return and be blameless before the LORD and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD.

- Moses has succeeded in getting them to commit to the war that awaits on the other side of the Jordan in order to possess this land.
  - Make no mistake about it, if the tribes of Reuben and Gad could have gotten away with not having to do this, they certainly wouldn't go.
- 11: Worldliness - They'd become so worldly minded they were of no heavenly good. They desired the things of the world more than God.

"It is very hard for me to accept the fact that it is now very rare for anyone to come into the house of God with guard completely down, head bowed and with the silent confession: 'Dear Lord, I am ready and willing to hear what You will speak to my heart today!' We have become so learned and so worldly and so sophisticated and so blasé and so bored and so religiously tired that the clouds of glory seem to have gone from us."

A.W. Tozer, "Christ the Eternal Son" p. 108-109

- As I was thinking about and meditating on this chapter, something sort of dawned on me as it relates to these two tribes wanting this.
  - Here's what I'm thinking; They seem to have this mindset that they are better and more deserving of this land than the other tribes.
12. Arrogance: This may in some way, be the most detrimental of all the hindrances. They fancy themselves more highly than they ought.